DC
MARVEL
AVENGERS
JLA
BUSIEK • PÉREZ
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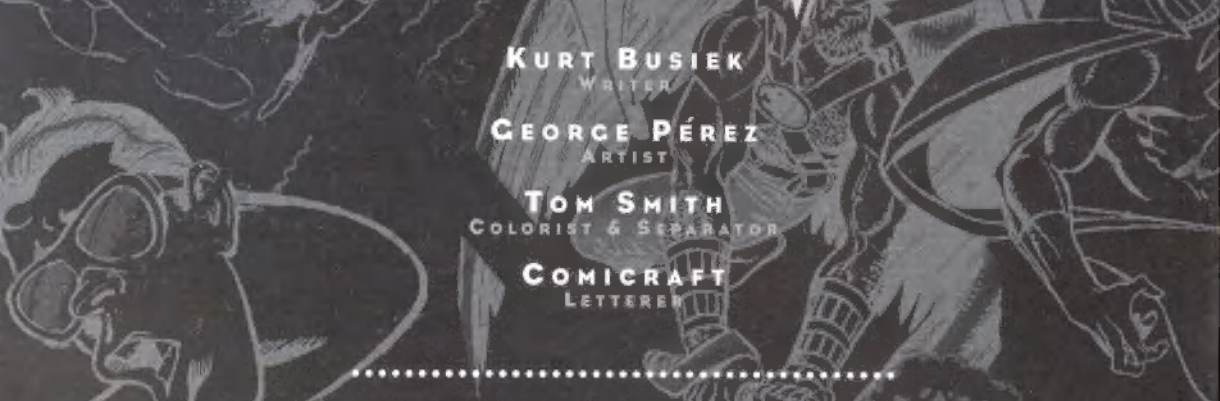


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## The Barriers Between Worlds Are Crumbling...

Across realities, a powerful and mysterious danger looms.

The mighty Avengers and the Justice League of America, the greatest heroes of their respective worlds, have been dealing with bizarre intruders -- villains and monsters from each universe are appearing in the other, on Earth and through space.

The Justice League is contacted by the enigmatic Grandmaster, a being from the other universe. He tells them both universes are in danger ... and unless the JLA goes in search of twelve items of power scattered across the twin realms, a universe will die.

They travel to the other Earth, finding it a bizarre, unsettling place where monsters and killers roam free, tyrants rule their nations with an iron hand, and innocents die for being genetic mutants. They have little respect for any heroes who protect this world. Superman, in particular, is appalled at the state of it.

However, when they reach the first item -- the staggeringly powerful Ultimate Nullifier -- they are confronted by the Avengers and hurled back to their own world. They manage to bring the Nullifier with them.

The Avengers encounter the cosmic scholar Metron, from the JLA's world. He tells them of the items of power and cautions them to secure them first, to safeguard their universe.

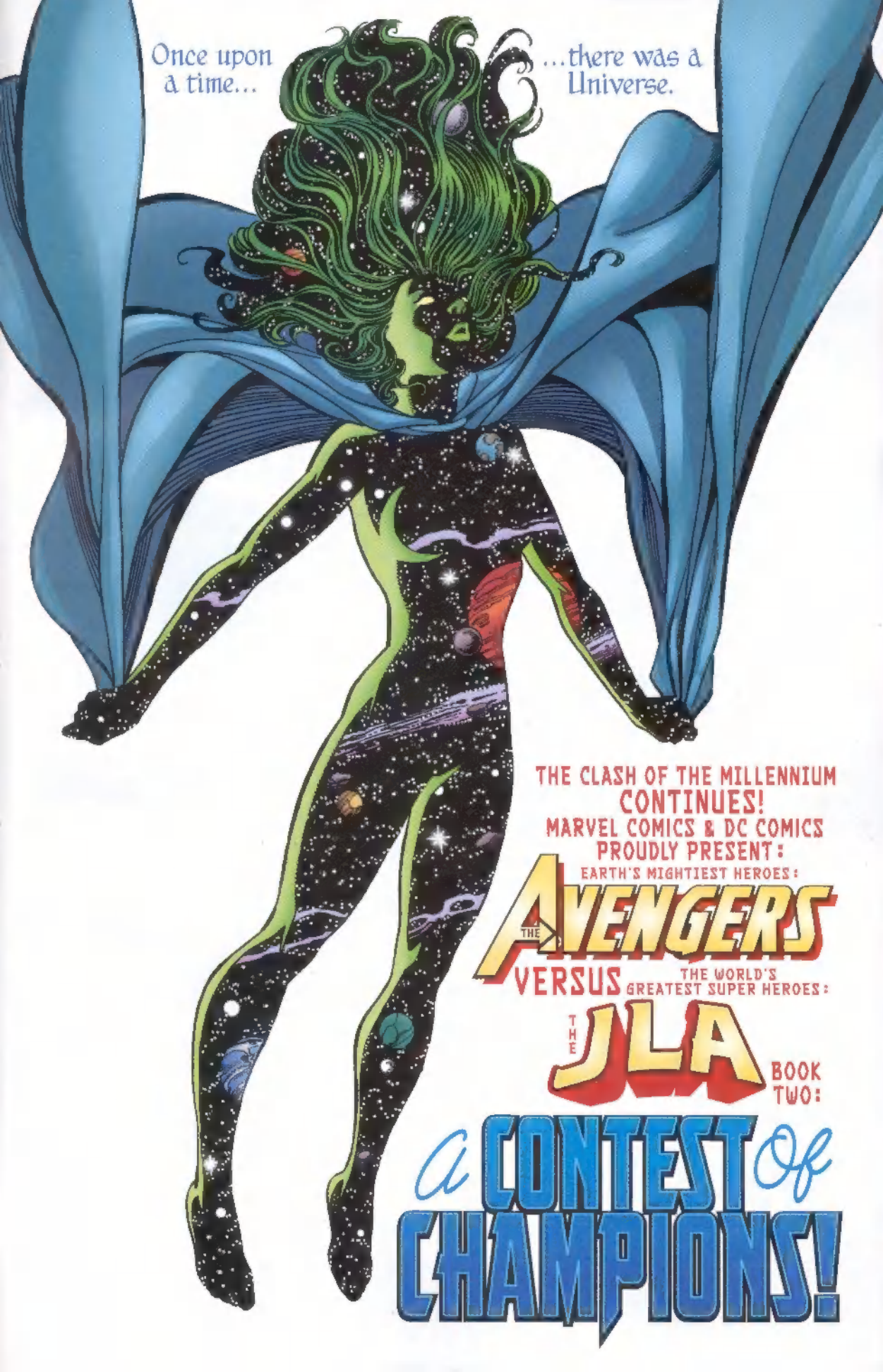
The Avengers, using technology from Metron, travel to the JLA's world. It is a surprising, unusual place to their eyes, where futuristic cities exist and super heroes are lionized and praised. They don't know what to make of it... Captain America thinks it must be a totalitarian state where superhumans rule the populace, rather than protecting them.

The JLA confronts the Avengers, and a melee breaks out.

What neither group knows, however, is that they are playing a game. A game devised by the Grandmaster to deal with a powerful intruder -- who has already destroyed at least two universes, and who is determined to destroy a third. An intruder named...

PROLOGUE: THE RECENT PAST.
EXPLAIN.
I AM A SCIENTIST. A SEEKER OF KNOWLEDGE. I SEARCH FOR THE SECRET OF CREATION, AND THE TRUTH OF WHAT EXISTED BEFORE.
IN MY HOME UNIVERSE, I SENT TIME-PROBES BACK-- BACK ALMOST TO THE MOMENT OF THE BIG BANG ITSELF--
KRONA?
MY KNOWLEDGE IS VAST, BUT I KNOW NOT THE NAME.
YOU SEE? YOU SEE?!
AN IMAGE! A SHADOW... LIKE A GIANT HAND! THERE ARE FORCES AT WORK HERE...FORCES WE MUST UNDERSTAND!
I MUST GO BACK FURTHER... FURTHER...!
"BUT WHEN I PRESSED FORWARD, A FORCE WAS UNLEASHED. DANGEROUS, DESTRUCTIVE...
"AND MY FELLOWS CONDEMNED ME FOR SEEKING TRUTH, FOR DOING WHAT THEY SHOULD HAVE DONE THEMSELVES.
"THEY FEARED A LEGEND OF UTTER DESTRUCTION SHOULD THE TRUTH BE LEARNED."
THEN THINK OF ME AS LIKELY DEATH...
...DEATH FOR THIS ENTIRE UNIVERSE.
WE DO NOT BELIEVE IN DEATH, KRONA...
...AND WILL NOT ROB YOU OF YOUR IMMORTALITY.
BUT YOU WILL BE REDUCED TO DISEMBODIED ENERGY...
...TO CIRCLE HARMLESSLY THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSE FOREVER.
"AND I WAS CAST OUT."

"IN TIME, I TRAVELED BEYOND MY UNIVERSE...
"...AND SOUGHT ANSWERS STILL.
"BUT THE LEGEND, IT SEEMED, WAS TRUE...
"...AND WHATEVER METHODS I TRY, WHATEVER APPROACH I TAKE, NO UNIVERSE HAS SURVIVED MY...INVESTIGATIONS."
NOW I AM HERE, AND I INTEND TO TRY ANEW.
YOU WOULD...WOULD TRULY DESTROY A UNIVERSE TO FURTHER YOUR QUEST? A UNIVERSE?
I HAVE DONE SO ALREADY.
AND WILL DO SO A MILLION TIMES OVER, TO GAIN WHAT I SEEK.
I HAVE TOLD YOU THIS BECAUSE YOUR OWN POWERS HAVE BLOCKED MY NEWEST PROBES.
BUT THE POWER OF ALL I HAVE DESTROYED IS MINE. SO STAND ASIDE, OR I SHALL--
A MOMENT.
I DO NOT WISH MY UNIVERSE DESTROYED.
PERHAPS I SHOULD MENTION, THEN, THAT THERE IS A BEING IN THIS REALITY WHO HAS LIVED THROUGH THE BIG BANG...
...AND WHO KNOWS WHAT CAME BEFORE.
WH-WHAT?!
TELL ME THIS BEING'S NAME, THEN! ITS NAME, AND WHERE I MIGHT FIND IT! SWIFTLY, BEFORE I--
AH. IT SEEMS WE BOTH DESIRE SOMETHING OF THE OTHER.
I AM EN DWI GAST, THE GRANDMASTER. I LIVE FOR GAMES OF SKILL. PERHAPS...
...WE SHOULD PLAY A GAME TO DECIDE MATTERS?
PROLOGUE ENDS.


Once upon a time...
...there was a Universe.
THE CLASH OF THE MILLENNIUM CONTINUES!
MARVEL COMICS & DC COMICS PROUDLY PRESENT:
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES:
THE AVENGERS
VERSUS
THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER HEROES:
THE JLA
BOOK TWO:
A CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS!

METROPOLIS.

A MOMENT AGO, SUPERMAN, SPEAKING FOR THE JUSTICE LEAGUE, ORDERED THE AVENGERS TO STAND DOWN AND BE TAKEN INTO CUSTODY.

A MOMENT AGO, THOR RESPONDED FOR THE AVENGERS, PUTTING SUPERMAN THROUGH A BUILDING WITH HIS ENCHANTED HAMMER.

THAT WAS A MOMENT AGO.

MARSTON INDUSTRIES

VERILY...

...THIS "JUSTICE LEAGUE" MAY BE RAVING, DANGEROUS MADMEN...BUT STILL, THEY ARE DOUGHTY WARRIORS INDEED!

AW, THEY'RE NOT SO TOUGH, THOR--THEY'RE JUST SQUADRON SUPREME LITE, LIKE I SAID!

HERE--

--I'LL SHOW YOU HOW IT'S DONE--

--STARTING WITH THE WHIZZER WANNABE IN RED!

AH-AH! NOT THAT EASY, "PURPLE ARROW!"

HEH. BOOMERANG ARROW GETS 'EM EVERY--

SORRY--

HUH?

--BUT I'VE HAD A LITTLE EXPERIENCE WITH BOOMERANGS--!
AW, MAN!
IT WOULDA WORKED ON THE WHIZZER...
AND, AS THE BATTLE RAGES...
THEY FACE EACH OTHER.
CAUTIOUS. DETERMINED.
EXPERIENCED.
THEIR EYES LOCK.
THEY EACH DRAW BREATH.

THEIR BLOWS LAND WITH ALMOST NO FORCE. AT FIRST.
A TAP.
A BRUSH.
THEY TEST.
ASSESS.
A FEINT.
A COUNTER.
A SHIFT.
A RESPONSE.
ALL RIGHT.
IT'S CONCEIVABLE YOU COULD BEAT ME, AVENGER. BUT IT WOULD TAKE YOU A VERY LONG TIME. TELL ME THIS, THOUGH--
--DO YOU WANT TO?
NO.
YOU'RE NOT THE ENEMY.
WE'RE ALL JUST PAWNS, IN A LARGER SCHEME.

THEN WE MIGHT BE BETTER OFF LETTING THE OTHERS PLAY OUT EVENTS ACCORDING TO THE DESIRES OF WHOEVER'S PULLING THE STRINGS--
--WHILE THE TWO OF US TRY TO FIND SOME REAL ANSWERS.
YOU'RE ON.
LET'S GO.
AS THEY DEPART...
I--BLAST IT, I CAN'T--WHAT'S BLOCKING--
WANDA? WHAT IS WRONG, MY SISTER?
I'M TRYING TO CAST A HEX, BUT I CAN'T--CAN'T SUMMON THE CHAOS MAGIC!
IT'S EASY AT HOME, BUT HERE IT'S--
--IT FEELS SO--
OH.
WANDA?
OH!
THE POWER POURS INTO HER, RIPS THROUGH HER--SMASHING OUTWARD LIKE AN EARTHQUAKE, A HURRICANE, A TIDAL WAVE--

AND--
OW. THAT WASN'T ANY FUN...
I DOUBT IT WAS MEANT TO BE, GREEN LANTERN.
WHOO! WAY TO GO, WITCHIE! THAT'LL SHOW 'EM--!
THAT...
...THAT WAS ONE OF YOURS?!
MY...MY HEAD! WHO...?
THERE, WONDER WOMAN! THE ONE THEY CALL THE SCARLET WITCH!
WANDA? WHAT WAS...
IT'S CHAOS MAGIC, PIETRO. IN THIS WORLD...
...IT'S DIFFERENT. WILDER, MORE POWERFUL. IT'S LIKE NOTHING I'VE EVER FELT BEFORE... I CAN SENSE WORLDS, FORCES, BALANCES...
I CAN... I CAN...
I KNOW WHERE ALL THE ITEMS WE SEEK ARE... I CAN FEEL THEM!
AND I CAN...
QUICKLY, LEAGUERS! BEFORE THEY--
AVENGERS! HERE THEY--
HUH?

THEY'RE GONE! BUT WHERE...?
NOWHERE WITHIN ■ THOUSAND MILE RADIUS, KYLE. THEY'VE GOTTEN AWAY.
I'M CONCERNED. THAT WAS DANGEROUSLY POWERFUL MAGIC.
YES. POWERFUL ON ITS OWN...
...AND WE'VE ■ WARNED THAT IF THEY GATHER THE ARTIFACTS THEY'RE SEEKING, IT COULD DOOM ■ UNIVERSE.
THEN WE'LL GET TO THEM FIRST, SUPERMAN. BUT THERE'S MORE WE NEED TO DO. BATMAN ■ THE ATOM ARE MISSING.
NO.
■ HAVE LITTLE TIME, AND IT WAS IN OUR MINDS THAT THE GRANDMASTER IMPLANTED THE KNOWLEDGE OF WHERE THE ITEMS OF POWER ARE.
■ MUST GO--SEEK THEM OUT.
BATMAN AND THE ATOM ■ THEY CAN WAIT.
■ THE MEANTIME, I'M SENDING OUT A TELEPATHIC MESSAGE, CONTACTING JLA RESERVISTS AND OTHER PAST MEMBERS...
THEN WE'LL FIND THEM, AQUAMAN.
WE'LL SPLIT UP. HALF OF US CAN--
...WARNING THEM TO PROTECT THE ARTIFACTS ■ ■ OUR UNIVERSE.

ALL RIGHT, HERE'S WHAT WE'LL DO.
FLASH, YOU CAN SEND US ACROSS THE DIMENSIONAL GULF--
...BUT YOU'LL STILL HAVE TO STAY BEHIND YOURSELF...
...SINCE THERE'S NO SPEED [redacted] IN THAT OTHER WORLD. GATHER THE OTHERS, AID [redacted] THE DEFENSE.
OOH, WHO DIED AND MADE HIM KING, HUH?
OH, WAIT, THAT'S RIGHT...
YEAH, YEAH...
...ONE OF [redacted] GETS TO BE PSYCHO-POWERFUL OVER HERE...
...BUT I'VE GOT NO POWERS OVER THERE?
HOW FAIR IS THAT?!
WALLY! ONE OF THE THINGS THEY'RE AFTER IS MY POWER BATTERY! IT'S IN MY APARTMENT!
DON'T LET 'EM GET IT!
NO PROBLEM, KYLE--I'LL BREEZE BY AS SOON AS YOU'RE GONE!
DON'T WORRY--
YOUR POWER BATTERY IS SAFE WITH
AVENGERS MANSION
BREEPeepBREEPeepBRI
PeepBREEPeepBREEPe
THEY'RE BACK.

SOMEWHERE ALONG I-95...
HUH?
THIS IS METROPOLIS? THIS IS ALL METROPOLIS IN THEIR WORLD?
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THESE PEOPLE?
AS NEAR AS I CAN TELL FROM A QUICK SCAN...
...THIS EARTH IS SLIGHTLY SMALLER THAN OURS, AND HAS FEWER CITIES, [redacted] URBAN GROWTH, AT LEAST ON THE EAST COAST.
MAYBE THEY'RE JUST BACKWARD.
SUPERMAN! THAT'S A [redacted] UNCHARITABLE--
NONE OF THIS IS IMPORTANT, NOT AT THE MOMENT. THERE [redacted] FIVE ITEMS LEFT [redacted] THIS REALITY-PLANE. BUT [redacted] SHOULDN'T SPREAD OURSELVES TOO THIN.
THREE TEAMS.
GOOD, KYLE, YOU'RE WITH ME.
ARTHUR...
:SIGH:
YOICKS-- AND AWAAAAY...
ALL RIGHT, EVERYONE--
--YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN YOUR POSITIONS, CIRCLING THE GLOBE.
AS SOON AS THE TRACKER TELLS [redacted] WHERE THEY'RE STRIKING--
--MOVE IN.
SOMEBODY'LL HAVE TO STAY BEHIND, [redacted] AN EYE ON THINGS...
I'LL DO IT, WASP. YOU AND YELLOWJACKET HAVE MORE EXPERIENCE, [redacted] GET INTO THE FIELD.
THANKS, TRIATHLON--
--I APPRECIATE IT.
SURE, [redacted] JUST BRING BACK THE GOLD, HUH?

MANHATTAN. THE JUSTICE LEAGUE'S UNIVERSE.
CRUMMY LUCK...CAN RUN BETWEEN WORLDS... DON'T GET TO GO... STUCK HERE BABY-SITTING A GREEN...
HUH?
AIHH!
THIS IS AMAZING. I KNEW HE WAS COMING--FELT IT. THIS "MOTHER BOX"-- SHE'S ENHANCED [redacted] THEIR SENSITIVITY, THEIR RANGE--
YEAH, GREAT, SURE.
NOT SO COCKY NOW, ARE YOU SMART-MOUTH?
I'M STILL GETTIN' OVER HOW EASY WANDA CAN JUST SEND US TO WHEREVER THESE THINGS ARE
SO. WE GOT ONE. NOW WHAT?
NOW?
NOW I PUT THE TWO OF YOU THROUGH THE WALL, TRAMPLE YOU INTO THE ASPHALT OUTSIDE AND TAKE THAT [redacted] V--
--UHH?!
OH, MAN.
KYLE IS GONNA KILL ME...
THE HIMALAYAS.

HAWKEYE--THE LAITERN! WHERE DID IT GO?
I...I DON'T KNOW!
I HAD IT WHILE WANDA WAS PORTIN' ■ ■ BUT AS SOON AS WE ARRIVED, IT KINDA...JUST DISSOLVED!
"CLINT, I SCANNED THAT THING--IT COULD POWER MANHATTAN FOR A YEAR OR MORE, AND STILL NOT RUN OUT! IF WE'VE LOST IT..."
1-1.
TIE SCORE.
THE GAME BEGINS IN EARNEST...
SANTO RICO. THE AVENGERS' UNIVERSE.
THIS EARTH MAY BE SMALLER THAN OURS, SUPERMAN...
...BUT IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'VE GOT ROOM FOR ■■■■ COUNTRIES WE DON'T HAVE!
■ THEY CAN'T INSPIRE THE POPULACE, I SUPPOSE, THIS ■ WHAT THEY GET.
I'LL USE MY X-RAY VISION, SEARCH FOR THE ARTIFACT...
PERHAPS. SOME OF OURS AREN'T HERE, HOWEVER. SANTA PRISCA. HASARAGUA. XOCHATAN...ALL MISSING.
BUT THIS-- IS THIS A MONUMENT TO SOMETHING? IS THIS THE RESPECT THEIR HEROES EARN?
THIS?
BETTER LOOK FAST, BIG BLUE--
--'CAUSE WE'VE GOT COMPANY!

CENTRAL CITY. THE FLASH MUSEUM.
THIS IS QUITE SOME WORLD, WANDA.
HEROES ARE RESPECTED, NOT HOUNDED... NO HATRED OF MUTANTS...
NO WONDER THIS "JUSTICE LEAGUE" IS SO ASSURED. THEY HAVE IT EASY!
YES. THE CREATURE FOUGHT... THE STARFISH..
AND HERE, SISTER. LOOK AT THIS!
THE SPEEDSTERS HERE... THEY TAP INTO SOMETHING CALLED THE "SPEED FORCE." THAT'S WHAT MAKES THE RED-CLAD ONE SO FAST!
PERHAPS, IF YOU CAN TAP INTO THEIR CHAOS MAGIC, I CAN--
YES...
WANDA? ARE YOU WELL?
IF SHE IS, INTERLOPER...
...SHE WON'T BE FOR LONG!
ASGARD..
TELL ME, DIANA...
...HOW EXACTLY DID WE TRAVEL HERE?
I KNOW YOU SENSED THE ARTIFACT WE SEEK, BUT...
I FOLLOWED THE PATH, IT IS SIMILAR TO HOW I REACH OLYMPUS, WHEN I TRAVEL THERE.
IT IS... HARD TO EXPLAIN-- NOT FOR MOST MORTAL MINDS TO UNDERSTAND.
"MORTAL MINDS." DO YOU THINK I'M SOME--
ARTHUR-- LOOK!
HAH! I KNEW IT!
YOU VANISHED FROM OUR SCANNERS-- AND YOU'D GONE!
HOWDY.
I HAVE ASKED THE ASGARDIANS NOT TO INTERFERE. COME DOWN, THEN--
--AND LET HERCULES TEST YOUR METTLE!

DEAL WITH THE WOMAN, ARTHUR. GET THE ARTIFACT.

YOU ARE HERCULES, THEN? DESPOILER OF HIPPOLYTA?

I WOULD NOT USE THOSE WORDS, MYSELF--

--BUT I DID HAVE THE HONOR OF--

--UHHH!

HI. I'M THE SHE-HULK. HOW DO YOU LIKE ME SO FAR?

I'VE GOT THIS ONE, SUPERMAN! YOU NEED A HAND?

DON'T... :NNNH:...BE SO COCKY, KID! WONDER MAN...:NNH:...

...ISN'T THAT EASILY BEATEN!

H-AHH!

C-CAN'T... CAN'T BREAK...

HE'S SO...SO FAST...

[illegible] ON, WARBIRD! JUST HANG ON! I'LL BE THERE IN A MINUTE!

OH, LIKE FUN YOU WILL, PAL!

BLUE BEETLE!

CAN'T YOU AND BLACK CANARY HANDLE ONE OPPONENT?

OW!

HEY, YOU TRY IT, HAWKMAN! HE'S FAST--!

YES. YES, I AM.

MAYBE NOT AS FAST AS YOUR FLASH--

--BUT FAST ENOUGH!

--TO DODGE THIS?

OH? ARE YOU FAST ENOUGH--

N-NO!

C-CAN'T LET THEM-- MUSTN'T LET--

UHH!

LOOK, GUY-- YOU'RE STRONG, AND YOU'RE PLENTY TOUGH, AND YOU'RE NOT BAD-LOOKING, BUT FACE IT--

--YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BEAT ME!

O-OF COURSE! THAT'S IT--!

HGH!

THERE!
ONE MORE PUNCH, WARBIRD, AND I'LL BE--
SORRY.
SHE COULDN'T WAIT.
SUPERMAN, LOOK!
UHHH...
THERE IT IS! THE ORB OF RA!
"2-1"
HEY! COME BACK HERE!
YOU'RE AS SLIPPERY AS AN EEL!
I'LL TAKE THAT AS A COMPLIMENT, SHE-HULK.
[illegible]ND I WOULDN'T [illegible] FINDING OUT [illegible] DAY WHICH OF US WOULD TRULY WI[illegible] A BATTLE.
BUT WHAT I'D FORGOTTEN IS THAT I DON'T NEED TO BEAT YOU.
JUST TO CLAIM THE PRIZE.
AND I CAN SENSE IT...
STAND BACK, ALL OF YOU!
HIPPOLYTA WAS MY MOTHER-- AND I SHALL PUNISH THIS VILLAIN AS I SEE--
WONDER WOMAN! I HAVE IT!
I HAVE IT!
"3-1"
WH...
WHAT...
WANDA!
WHAT HAPPENED?
I HAPPENED.
WHAT WE SEEK IS THAT WAY.
YOU...DO NOT [illegible] YOURSELF, WANDA. IF YOU ARE ILL, [illegible] MUST...
IT IS THE CHAOS MAGIC. IT IS STRONG. CORRUPTING. I FEEL IT...EATING AWAY AT ME. AT MY SOUL, MY [illegible]
BUT I WILL... ENDURE. AS LONG AS I MUST.
THE ARTIFACT IS THE WAND OF WATOOMB. TAKE IT...
...AND LET US GO.
"3-2"
THE GAME MOVED TOO SLOWLY, GRANDMASTER. I BEGIN TO LOSE PATIENCE.
AH, YOU IGNORE THE ELEGANT INTRICACIES OF IT. MOVE AND COUNTER-MOVE. CALCULATION AND DESPERATION.
FOR INSTANCE, TWO PLAYERS REMOVED THEMSELVES FROM THE BOARD. DO THEY PLAN A SURPRISE? HAVE THEY GIVEN UP?

"WHERE MIGHT THEY BE?"
YOU...LOST A PARTNER?
...
I DID. NOW COME DOWN HERE, [redacted] YOU'RE THROUGH SIGHTSEEING. [redacted] HAVE [redacted] TO DO.
HNH. THAT'S HOW IT IS WITH HIM, EH?
NOTHING ON THIS "GRANDMASTER." I'VE GOT ZATANNA AT THE WATCHTOWER, TRACING THAT WOMAN'S CHAOS MAGIC--
--AND DISPATCHING FORCES TO COLLECT THE ARTIFACTS. FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN OF THESE AVENGERS, I CAN'T PROMISE THAT'LL GIVE YOU MUCH TIME, THOUGH.
THIS IS UNUSUAL FOR YOU, B. VISITORS, IN THE BATCAVE?
UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES.
WHAT HAVE WE GOT?
NICE TO HAVE AN OVERCONFIDENT FOE, MA'AM. IT MAKES IT [redacted]
BUT I'M NOT SURPRISED THE [redacted] INVOLVED. THE AVENGERS HAVE HAD EXPERIENCE WITH HIS DEADLY COSMIC GAMES.
THERE MUST [redacted] PLAYER ON THE OTHER SIDE, THOUGH.
[redacted] AND WHILE YOU DEALT WITH METRON, SOMETHING DOESN'T [redacted] RIGHT ABOUT THAT.
METRON'S A [redacted] AN EXPLORER. HE'S CRAFTY, BUT NOT [redacted]
STILL, HE'S IN THIS SOMEHOW. I'D LIKE TO KNOW... WHERE [redacted] RIGHT NOW...
...WHAT THE STAKES ARE...
THERE. THERE HE IS.

METRON'S LOG, ENTRY 51762-ALPHA, HOLO-SCAN IMBEDDED
THIS IS GALACTUS, DESTROYER OF WORLDS.
LAST SURVIVOR OF THE CYCLE OF CREATION AND DESTRUCTION THAT COLLAPSED A UNIVERSE AND BIRTHED A NEW ONE.
A BEING OF COSMIC, INSATIABLE HUNGER, WHO FEEDS ON THE LIFE-ENERGY OF PLANETS, LEAVING NOTHING BUT DEAD HUSKS IN HIS WAKE...
KRONA WILL STOP AT NOTHING—NOTHING—TO GAIN HIS SECRETS.
THE GAME, THE RULES WILL THEY CHECK HIM IN THE SLIGHTEST?
WE SHALL SEE.

WHATEVER HIS ROLE, THERE'S ONE THING WE CAN'T DO.
[redacted] CAN'T STOP THE [redacted] THE GRANDMASTER LEVIES DIRE PENALTIES ON ANYONE WHO QUITS. BESIDES...
WE [redacted] TO KEEP HIS ATTENTION--AND HIS OPPONENT'S--DIVERTED, FOCUSED ON THE GAME, WHILE WE INVESTIGATE.
ON THAT FRONT--
TAK
--I THINK I CAN PROVIDE A METHOD, AT LEAST.
WHAT...?
JUST A HOMING BEACON.
I WOULD PREFER THAT YOU ASK BEFORE BROADCASTING THE COORDINATES OF--
RELAX, BATMAN--
HEY THERE, HOWDY CAPTAIN AN' AYE-AYE, SIR!
BENJAMIN J. GRIMM, THE EVER-LOVIN' BLUE-EYED THING, REPORTIN' FER DUTY!
HEY. NICE DISS.

--THIS IS A FRIEND.
CHECK THIS OUT, CAP-- JUST WHAT YOU ASKED FOR.
ONE HANDY-DANDY TIME-BIKE, CUSTOMIZED FER KICKIN' AROUND OTHER DIMENSIONS.
OH, AN' YOU GOT A CALL.
REED?
I'VE BEEN ANALYZING THE DATA JAN PIPED OVER, CAPTAIN--
--AND BASED ON SCANS IRON MAN TOOK OF THE RESIDUE THIS "METRON" LEFT BEHIND AT MONSTER ISLAND--
--I'VE PRE-PROGRAMMED THE TIME-BIKE WITH SOME WAVELENGTHS YOU CAN TRACE.
FROM WHAT THEY TELL ME, YER SUPPOSED TA BE ONE'A THE BLACK HATS, BUT IF YER WITH CAP YER AN OKAY JOE IN MY BOOK.
I'D STAY FER COFFEE, BUT I GOTTA GET BACK, HELP REED AN' SUZIE WITH THE HEAVY LIFTIN'.
YER IDEA A' SMALL CHANGE, HUH?
AH, HERE WE GO.
YOU DON'T NEED ME FER GUMSHOEIN'-- EVEN COSMIC GUMSHOEIN'.
BUT YOU EVER NEED SOME CLOBBERIN' DONE, GIMME A RING. I'M YER MAN.
YOU WERE MORE PREPARED THAN YOU [redacted]
BEFORE WE CAME TO YOUR WORLD--
--WE SET SOME WHEELS [redacted] MOTION.
AND THAT WAS ONE OF THEM? HE HAS A... ROUGH-EDGED CHARM.
WAS THAT A KNOCK?
BEN GRIMM MAY NOT BE SLEEK AND ELEGANT, LIKE THE HEROES OVER HERE, MISTER.
BUT HE'S ONE OF THE FINEST MEN I KNOW--
"--AND HE GETS THE JOB DONE."

THE HIMALAYAS.

I DON'T WANNA BE RUDE...

...BUT WITCHIE THERE AIN'T LOOKIN' TOO GOOD. ON ME, THAT'D JUST BE FROSTBITE, BUT...

I AGREE, HAWKEYE.

WANDA? ARE YOU COPING ALL RIGHT?

NO.

I AM...UNDER ASSAULT. THIS MAGIC...I AM NOT TRAINED, NOT ATTUNED, NOT EXPERIENCED ENOUGH... I...CONTINUE TO ENDURE, HOWEVER.

I...AM SHIELDING THOR AND THE [redacted] FROM DETECTION, I THINK, BUT... IF I TRY TO DO ANYTHING ELSE, THEY MAY...

WE'RE TOO DEPENDENT ON MAGIC...MAGIC WE DON'T UNDERSTAND, AT THAT. MAYBE I CAN USE THE MOTHER BOX...

...MAKE SOME UNEXPECTED MOVES.

AND I WILL CONTINUE TRYING TO ACCESS THIS "SPEED FORCE"...

FINE, FINE.

ANY CHANCE WE CAN DO IT SOMEPLACE WARM, THOUGH?

WE'RE DOING WELL. BUT I DON'T LIKE THIS. THESE ITEMS--

--THEY'VE BEEN MOVED, PLANTED. [redacted] SHIFTED FROM WORLD TO WORLD. WHOEVER'S BEHIND IT, THEY'RE NOT JUST COLLECTING THE ITEMS.

SO IT'S SOMETHING ELSE. ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT...

WHADDYA SAY, CAPTAIN ATOM...

THE JLA WATCHTOWER.

...IS IT JUST ME, OR IS [redacted] PEEPERS HERE BOTHERING THE CHEESE OUT OF ANYONE ELSE?

NOT JUST YOU, GREEN ARROW...

I GOTTA GO TO THE BATHROOM.

BUT IF HE SEES THROUGH WALLS...

ANY NEWS?

NOT MUCH, RED TORNADO.

I'M SENSING PATTERNS IN THE CHAOS-MAGIC FIELD-- THE LORDS OF CHAOS [redacted] REALLY STIRRED UP, THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON--

--BUT IF SHE [redacted] ANYTHING, I'LL KNOW IT.

HAVE THE TELEPORTERS WARMED UP...

IF THIS WORKS RIGHT, IT'LL ACT AS A BATTERY...GATHERING AMBIENT SPEED FORCE AS YOU RUN... COLLECTING IT AND STORING IT...

...AND GIVING YOU A CHARGE YOU CAN TAP INTO IF YOU HAVE TO GO BACK TO THEIR WORLD.

THANKS, STEEL.

I HOPE IT WORKS. I HOPE ZATANNA FINDS I LEAD ON THEM FAST. AND I REALLY, REALLY HOPE I GET THAT POWER BATTERY BACK BEFORE KYLE FINDS OUT...

ALL RIGHT. EVERYONE READY? WANDA?

LET'S GO.

THEY'RE MOVING! THEY'RE MOVING! GO! GO!

I'LL GUIDE YOU...!

HAPPY HARBOR, RHODE ISLAND.
THOR! CAN YOU DISPERSE THIS CYCLONE?
IT PASSETH UNDERSTANDING, VISION--BUT THE STORM DOTH RESIST MY CONTROL.
VERY WELL.
OUR ASSAILANT SEEMS TO BE AN ANDROID, LIKE ME. I SHALL REACH HIM, INTANGIBLY, AND SOLIDIFY WITHIN--
--ENDING THE THREAT AT THE SOURCE!
WILL YOU?
HM?
INSIDE HIM? CIRCUITRY--
--AND SOMETHING MOOOOORRRRRRRREEEEE!
THEN TRULY, THOU ART A FIT FOE FOR THE MIGHTY TH--
EH?!
WHAT?
AHA!
THE MECHANICAL SHELL DOTH HIDE AN ELEMENTAL TEMPEST WITHIN!
JUST A GRADE-A, ALL-PURPOSE ATOMIC CONTAINMENT SPHERE-- COURTESY OF FIRESTORM, THE NUCLEAR MAN!
NICE WORK DISTRACTING THEM WHILE I GOT THE GOODS, REDDY! LET'S GET OUTTA HERE!
AND LET'S FIND A BIG BELLY BURGER RESTROOM BEFORE I BURST!
"4-2."

WAKANDA.
THE BLACK PANTHER WATCHES AS THEY BATTLE ON THE STEPS OF THE ROYAL PALACE.
HIS PALACE.
HIS CITY.
HIS LAND.
HE HAS BEEN AN AVENGER IN THE PAST, AND MAINTAINS CLOSE TIES TO THEM. BUT HE DOES NOT LIKE OUTSIDE CONFLICT SPILLING INTO HIS NATION.
OW!
OO!
OW!
OW! OO!
IS THAT NICE?
ENOUGH.
WE HAVE LITTLE TIME, PLASTIC MAN. IF YOU CANNOT STOP YOUR ASSAILANT--
≥GNHH!≤
--THEN I WILL.
OOH, HARSH!
AND THAT, BOYS AND GIRLS--
--IS WHY THE MARTIAN MANHUNTER STAYS HOME ON DATE NIGHTS.
WHAT NEXT, O MASTER OF THE MENTAL WHAMMY?
I CAN SENSE THE ARTIFA-- OH.
HE RECOVERS THAT WHICH THEY SEEK FROM THE BRANCHES IN WHICH IT NESTLES.
SECURITY REENS HAD AGGED IT SOON AS IT ARRIVED.
4-3

THIS [redacted] ALL THAT'S LEFT OF A UNIVERSE? AN [redacted] UNIVERSE?
HOW MANY LIVES...?
AND THIS IS A GAME WE PLAY. A GAME.
KANSAS.
Welcome To
SHALLYTOWN
America's Heartland Paradise
FT HAMM
I DON'T BELIEVE IT, HAWKEYE. YOU STILL HAVE YOUR LEAD-FOIL CONTAINMENT ARROW?
YOU [redacted] KNOW WHEN YOU'RE GONNA [redacted] INTO THE RADIOACTIVE [redacted] SHELLHEAD.
STILL, I JUST SHUT HIM UP--YOU SHUT HIM DOWN.
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO GET BOTH OF 'EM, THOUGH--I COULDA TAKEN THAT GREEN LOUDMOU--HEY!
I AM NOT GETTING USED TO THIS...
WE RECOVERED THE CASKET OF ANCIENT WINTERS, CLINT. THAT'S MORE IMPORTANT THAN PROVING WHO'S THE BETTER [redacted].
YEAH, BUT--
JOIN THE FIGHT WHERE WANDA NEEDS YOU NEXT. ME--
--I'M GOING TO SEE WHAT I CAN DO ELSEWHERE.
BOOM
"4-4."

SCANNERS INDICATE METRON'S PRESENCE. HE WAS HERE. AFTER THE DESTRUCTION.
THEN WE HAVE A TRAIL.
PARADISE ISLAND.
MINERVA!
GREAT HERA, WHAT--?
DENSITY MANIPULATION, HM? WELL, [redacted] AS DENSE AS YOU LIKE--I'LL STILL GO THROUGH YOU!
I THINK NOT.
WANDA, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
D-D--
DID HE G-GET IT?
D-DID QUICKSILVER GET--
I HAVE IT!
BUT WHY--WHY ISN'T IT VANISHING?
MAYBE
BECAUSE YOU'RE
NOT CLEAR YET?
FLASH!
I'LL--I'LL REACH THE [redacted] FORCE! I'LL FIND IT-- BEAT YOU--
SORRY.
LOOK, I ALREADY SCREWED UP [redacted] TODAY, AND MY BUDDY'S GONNA BE HACKED OFF AT ME, SO REALLY, IT'S NOTHING PERSONAL, BUT THIS TIME--
--I DON'T LOSE.
"5-4."

THE BLUE AREA OF THE MOON.
GOT HER!
HM?
GOT HER!
EH?
HUH? WHAT'RE YOU...
IF I CAN...MATCH WAVELENGTH... DUPLICATE ENERGY...
UH-OH! Q-FIELD'S NOT--
UH!
OKAY, WONDER WOMAN! I'VE GOT MINE ON ICE! YOU GO--
WAIT, WHAT'S--
BOOM!
AND THAT'S THE VALUE OF SURPRISE.
PHOTON, QUASAR, QUICKLY! THEY'LL RECOVER FAST!
NNH!
GOT IT!
"S-S."

WHAT IN--?
GOD, MOTHER AND COUNTRY!
THIS--
--THIS MUST [redacted] THE GRANDMASTER'S [redacted] ALL THESE [redacted]S!
ALL THIS-- THIS--
I'VE FOUGHT MEN WITH THIS KIND OF COMPULSION BEFORE. BUT NEVER WITH THIS SCOPE...
I KNOW WHAT YOU... HM?
OH, MAN--- AM I GLAD TO SEE YOU!

I'LL TELL YOU-- --EVER SINCE I HITCHED A [redacted] HERE ON METRON'S CHAIR-- --I'VE [redacted] WONDERING IF I'D EVER FIND A WAY OUT!
ATOM?
IN THE SIX-INCH FLESH, BATMAN.
I'LL ASK HOW YOU FOUND THIS PLACE LATER--
--IN THE MEANTIME, I'VE BEEN LOOKING AROUND, AND THERE'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD SEE.
DOWN THIS WAY...
NOW A HARD LEFT BY THE HUNDRED-FOOT-WIDE "HUNGRY HUNGRY HIPPOS" SET WITH WHAT LOOKS LIKE [redacted] SATANIC DEMON-HIPPOS...
...AND HERE.
THIRD CONSOLE IN.
IT LOOKS LIKE THIS [redacted] PERSON'S BEEN RECORDING HIS GAME, SO [redacted] CAN RELIVE IT LATER.
I WATCHED HIM AT THE CONTROLS, AND--
TEK
TAK
--THERE! THAT'S WHAT'S RECORDING NOW.
VUT
THAT LOOKS LIKE THE FILCHNER [redacted] SHELF, IN ANTARCTICA.
AND SUPERMAN...
YOU KNOW, I DON'T ENVY THE AVENGERS, SUPERMAN.
HM?
THE HEROES [redacted] SEEM [redacted] POWERFUL, IN GENERAL, THAN AT HOME. AND THEIR WORLD'S STACKED [redacted] T THEM--

--SO IT SEEMS LIKE THEY'VE GOT TO FIGHT AMAZINGLY HARD JUST TO KEEP THINGS ON AN EVEN [redacted]
MAYBE. THEY MAY NEED TO FIGHT HARDER THAN WE DO--
--BUT IT'S CLEAR THEY'RE NOT FIGHTING [redacted] ENOUGH.
UH... I THINK WHAT SUPERMAN MEANT WAS...
I KNOW WHAT HE MEANT, ATOM.
UH, OKAY. THAT WASN'T THE R[redacted]HT PART ANYWAY. LET ME [redacted]
VVT
--ME VERIFY [redacted] STAKES! IF I WIN, YOU WILL LEAD [redacted] TO THE DEATH [redacted]
...AND I CAN FORCE HIS SECRETS FROM HIM, EVEN IF IT DESTROYS THIS UNIVERSE IN THE PROCESS.
YES. AND IF I WIN--
--I LEAVE THIS UNIVERSE UNMOLESTED, AND SEEK ANSWERS ELSEWHERE?
PRECISELY.
NOT! I AGREE--WITH ONE CHANGE. SINCE I HAVE SUCH FAITH, LET US SWAP CHAMPIONS. YOUR WORLD SHALL BE MY WARRIOR--
--AND MINE SHALL BE YOURS.
BUT-- ARE WE AGREED? OR MUST I BEGIN FORCING WHAT I SEEK FROM YOU?
I...
...VERY WELL, KRONA. WE ARE AGREED.
SEE?
THEN THE GRANDMASTER'S... HE'S TRYING TO STOP THIS MONSTER--AND THE AVENGERS ARE FIGHTING FOR KRONA?!
IF THEY WIN... HE'LL MURDER OUR UNIVERSE. ANOTHER ENTIRE UNIVERSE...

APOKOLIPS.
YOU HAVE INVADED MY DOMAIN, [redacted] MY PARADEMONS, [redacted] MY [redacted] GUARD...AND FOR WHAT?
UH--
FOR THIS?
DEAR SWEET GOD IN HEAVEN--THAT'S THE INFINITY GAUNTLET! AND THIS GUY--HE LOOKS WORSE THAN THANOS, IF THAT'S EVEN POSSIBLE!
HE COULD REORDER TIME, SPACE, REALITY--!
MAN, OF ALL THE TIMES FOR WANDA TO DECIDE SHE HAD TO TAKE HALF OUR STRENGTH BACK HOME...!
YES, THIS IS CLEARLY WHAT THEY SEEK--
--AND I CAN FEEL THE MATRICES OF POWER WITHIN THE GEMS.
OUR...OUR INVESTIGATIONS HAVE BEEN COMPREHENSIVE, LORD DARKSEID...GIVEN THE [redacted] TRAITS.
AND THE GEMS--THEY DO SEEM DESIGNED TO AFFECT REALITY, AND MORE--
--BUT ANOTHER REALITY.
THEY DO NOT FUNCTION HERE.
BUT IT [redacted] DEAD--IT DOES [redacted]
WHY IS THAT?
THEN THIS IS A WASTE OF MY TIME.

TAKE IT, THEN--
I'LL CATCH--
--TAKE IT, [redacted] THANK WHATEVER DEITIES YOU [redacted] TO ON THE COLDEST AND BLEAKEST [redacted] NIGHTS THAT I HAVE OTHER MATTERS TO OCCUPY ME.
TAKE IT--
UHH!
HIS EYES--THAT'S THE OMEGA EFFECT!
GOT TO GET IT BEFORE...
...BEFORE...
--AND BEGONE.
"G-S."

--UH?
TELEPORTED... BUT... ...WHERE...?
OH.
THE SAVAGE LAND.
WANDA, [redacted] YOU...?
I...FEEL MUCH [redacted] NOW THAT I'M BACK HOME. I JUST... I [redacted] I STILL HAD THAT POWER, AT LEAST FOR NOW.
BECAUSE THAT'S IT...
...THAT'S THE FINAL PRIZE.
SO.
SO.
SO WHAT?!
SOMEBODY GO! GET IT!

NO SWEAT, WITCHIE! IT'S OURS!
LIKE HELL!
AND WITH THAT...
THOU THINKEST MOST HIGHLY OF THYSELF AND THY LEAGUE, "SUPERMAN"...
...BUT NOW THOU SHALT FEEL THE WRATH...
...OF THE GOD OF THUNDER!
A GOD, YOU SAY.
A SMALL GOD, PERHAPS—
...OF A SMALL WORLD!
...IT BEGINS.
NNH!
H-AHH!
UHH!
AIGKH!

THIS TIME, BABE--
YEAH? THIS TIME--
KRASH
THOU... ART STRONG!
BUT THE MEASURE OF ANY... BE HE MAN OR GOD... IS NOT WHAT STRENGTH HE HAS...
...BUT WHAT HE DOES WITH IT!
TELL YOURSELF THAT, MISTER... EASE YOURSELF TO SLEEP AT NIGHT WHILE YOU LET YOUR WORLD GO TO HELL! WHERE I COME FROM, THOUGH...
...LIVES MATTER!
AGHKH!
MY POWER!
YOU'RE-- DRAINING MY--?
--THIS TIME I'M READY FOR YOU!

JACKAL! ARROGANT... SNEERING JACKAL! DO THY WORST... THOR WILL NOT... WILL NOT FALL!
BUT... THOU SHALT...
NNH!
YOU... WON'T...
O-ODIN'S... BEARD! HOW CAN YOU...? THE MIGHTIEST...
...MIGHTIEST IN NINE WORLDS CANNOT...
S-SORRY...
SORRY TO... DISAPPOINT... BUT IN... MY WORLD, IT LOOKS LIKE... THE DIALS...
...GO UP TO ELEVEN!
WH--?
HM?

HE--
THOR--
HE... ...MAY BE...SINGLE TOUGHEST OPPONENT... I'VE EVER...
UHH!
YOU DON'T--
--DON'T DO THAT--
NOT TO HIM!
NOT TO THOR!
HERA!
WHAT--?

WHAT IN--?
GET AWAY FROM HIM!
SUPERMAN!
SUPERMAN, ARE YOU--
POSEIDON'S THRONE!
AND...
UHH!
TH-THANKS, CAP'N ATOM...
CAN BARELY... DRAINED... NEED BATTERY, BUT...
COULD... GRAB IT... BUT CAN'T... DEFEND IT...
MAYBE...

WHOA!
BRIGHTEST DAYBLACKEST NIGHTN'EVILSHALL ESCAPE M'SIGHT...
C'MON, BABY, HOLD TOGETHER, YOU CAN DO IT...HAL'S OATH'LL...
THOSE WH'WORSHIPEVIL'S MIGHT...
HEY!
THIS STUFF IS GREAT!
OH, NO!
WARBIRD, I NEED YOU!
I-- I-- WOO.
NO...WONDER THEY'RE ALL SO IMPRESSED BY THAT THING. THE COSMIC CUBE, HUH?
I JUST THOUGHT IT WAS A P[redacted] SOURCE, BUT MAN! THAT'S SOME SERIOUS MOJO!
OKAY. TIME TO--

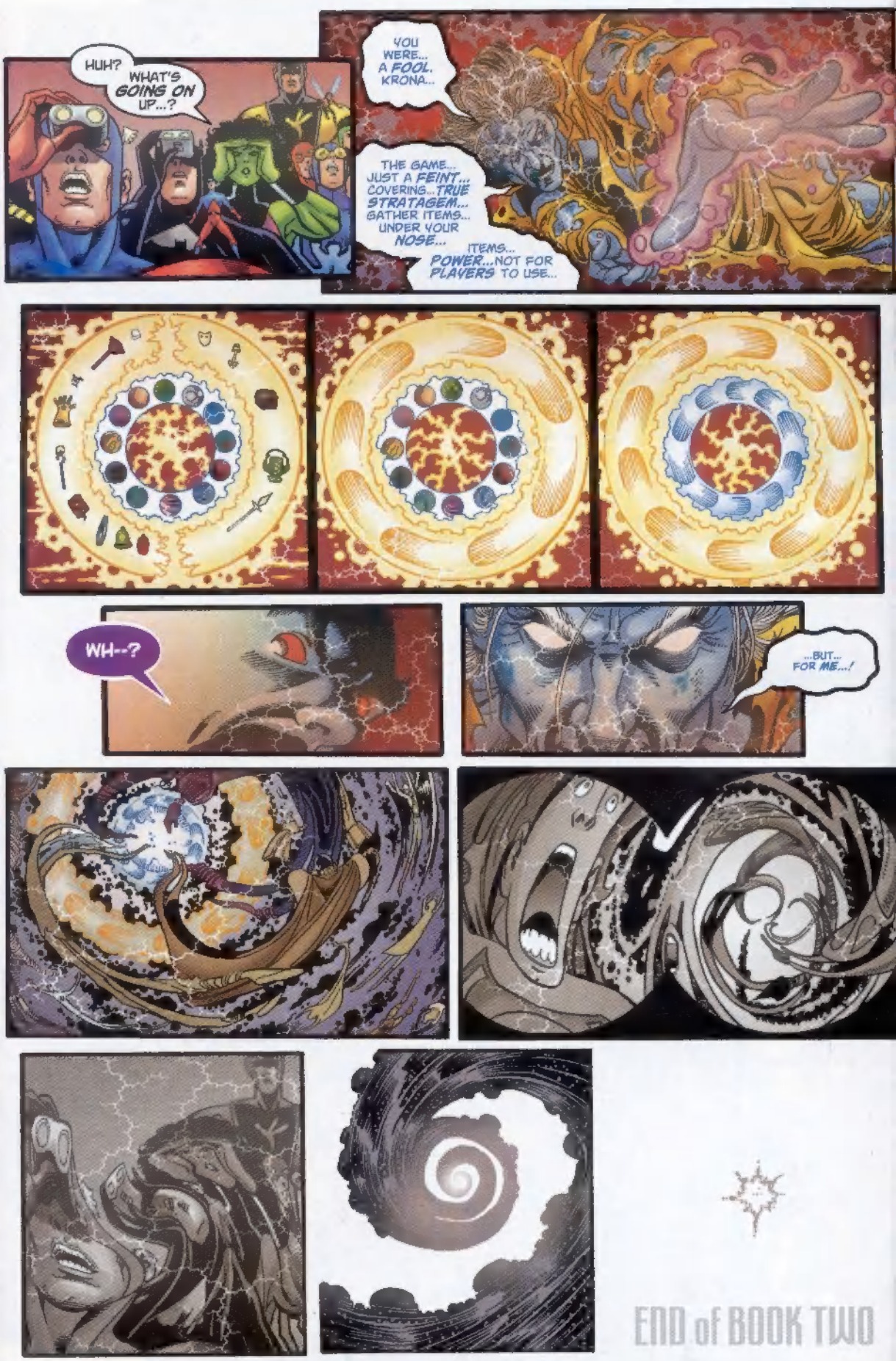
HUH?
AH-AH! CHROME LOOKS GOOD ON YOU, KID, BUT I CAN'T LET YOU--
--HM?
NOT A CHANCE, LEATHER GAL.
THIS THING IS ■ LEAGUE HANDS NOW, AND IN LEAGUE HANDS IT--
--WH--?
HELLO.
YOU'RE ON MY EARTH NOW. AND YOU'RE ALREADY STARTING TO SLOW DOWN. SO LET ME JUST SAY...
...IT'S NOTHING PERSONAL. OH, NO. NOT AT ALL.
OUAHH!
HAH! I'M FASTER! FASTER! SPEED FORCE BE DAMNED!
HAH! I'M--
--EH?
WH--?

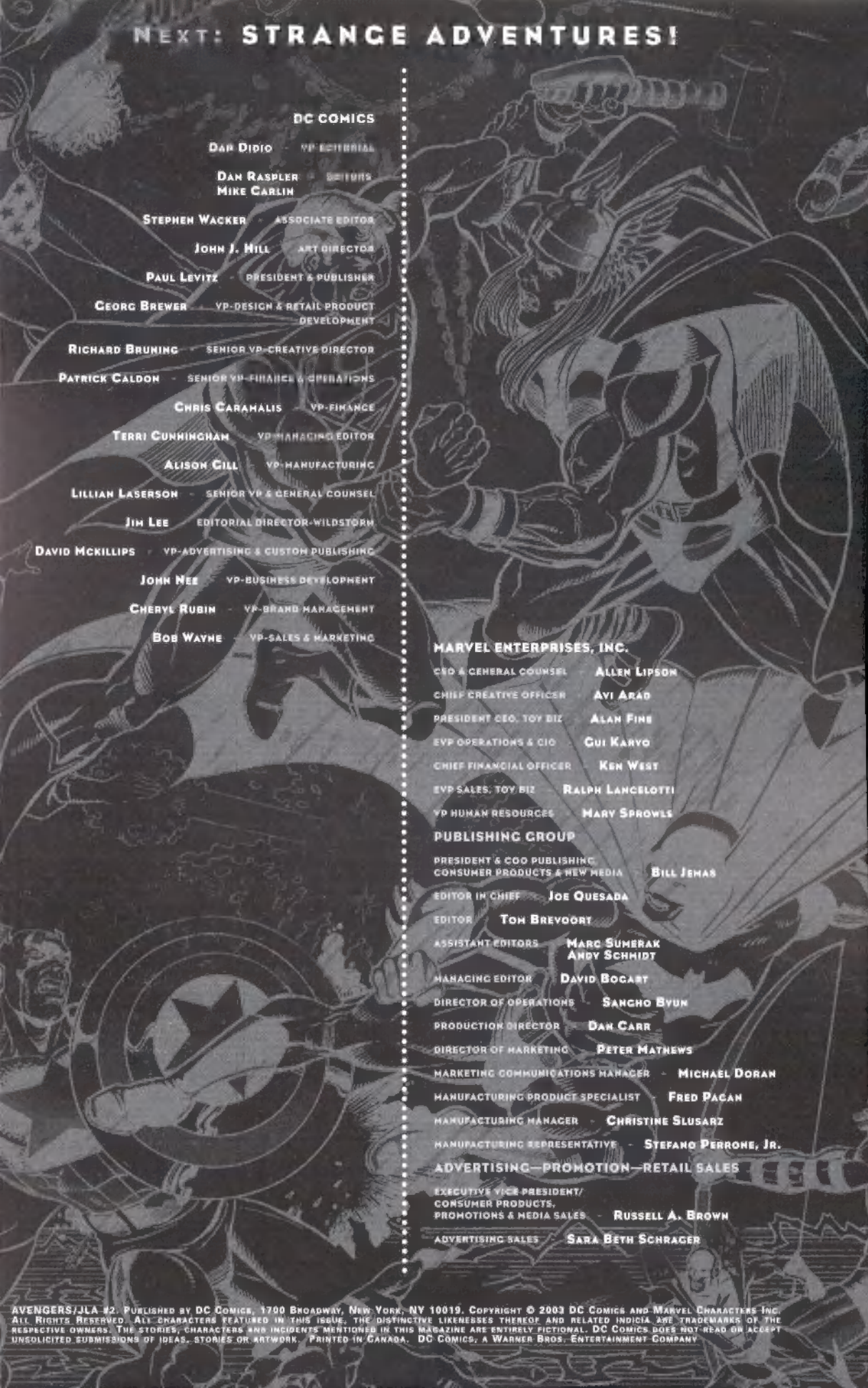
THE LAST ARTIFACT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN SECURED--
I HAVE IT!
THE AVENGERS HAVE THE COSMIC CU--
THE GAME WOULD APPEAR TO BE
THE SCORE IS EVEN.
I HAVE IT.

NO! I'LL--
YOU WON'T--
HAWKEYE! STAND DOWN!
BUT--
I SAID STAND DOWN! IT'S OVER! LET IT GO.
I HAVE THE CUBE. AND IF I UNDERSTAND CORRECTLY, I CAN USE ITS POWER TO BANISH--
NO, LEAGUER.
THESE ITEMS WERE NOT CHOSEN SO THAT THE PLAYERS COULD USE THEIR POWER.
THE GAME IS OVER. THE SCORE IS 7-5, IN FAVOR OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE.
YOUR CHOSEN CHAMPIONS WERE DEFEATED, KRONA. THUS, YOU MUST GO, AND MENACE THIS CONTINUUM NO MORE.
I WILL--
WH
NO!
NO, I WILL HAVE THE ANSWERS I SEEK! I WILL KNOW THE TRUTH! I WILL KNOW IT!

SUPERMAN...?
I'LL... I'LL LIVE. I THINK.
WHO DID IT? WHO IS IT THAT KNOWS? TELL ME! TELL ME, OR I'LL--
AVENGERS! PULL THEM APART! NOW!
MOVE!
BACK HIM UP, JLA!
CAN YOU...FIGHT, THOR?
IF...THOU CANST, I CAN...
I SAW IT-- SAW IT IN YOUR MIND!
GALACTUS!
THAT'S... POWER...
THAT'S... FASHION?
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS OUTRAGE?
GALACTUS!

TELL ME THE TRUTH!
TELL ME YOUR SECRETS!
TELL ME NOW--TELL ME IMMEDIATELY--
YOU ARE CLEARLY A MADMAN.
AND GALACTUS DOES NOT DEAL WITH MAD--
YOU WILL TELL ME!
≥NNH≤
YOU WILL TELL ME!
IF I HAVE TO TEAR YOU APART AND RIP THE SECRET FROM YOUR BROKEN CORPSE--
ALL TOGETHER! CONCENTRATE!
HIS ENERGY BARRIERS--
YES--THEY DEFY EVEN INTANGIBLE FORMS--
YOU
WILL TELL ME!
N...NO, KRONA...
...HE...WILL NOT.
≥NNH!≤


HUH?
WHAT'S GOING ON UP...?
YOU WERE... A FOOL, KRONA...
THE GAME... JUST A FEINT... COVERING... TRUE STRATAGEM... GATHER ITEMS... UNDER YOUR NOSE...
ITEMS... POWER... NOT FOR PLAYERS TO USE...
WH--?
...BUT... FOR ME...!
END of BOOK TWO



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